

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01646 232151Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
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R 231520Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8704

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T BEIRUT 1646

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: CALL ON PREMIER KARAME: GALLAGHER AND DYKES

REF:STATE 30980

1. SAW KARAME TODAY AT NOON. HE WAS SMILING, RESTED AND VERY FRIENDLY. HE INQUIRED ABOUT AMBASSADOR GODLEY, AND I TOLD HIM I EXPECTED AMBASSADOR BACK SOON. HE EXPRESSED HIS ADMIRATION FOR AMBASSADOR'S FORTITUDE AND RECUPERATIVE POWERS AND SENT HIS WARM REGARDS.

2. I EXPRESSED MY PLEASURE AT SEEING HIM UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS AND USG'S GREAT SATISFACTION THAT POLITICAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED AND THAT PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING IT IS PROCEEDING SO WELL. HE SMILED IN SELF-CONFIDENT WAY, EXPRESSING GRATITUDE AND CONFIDENCE THAT WITH GOD'S WILL SITUATION WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AS IT ALREADY HAS.

3. I RAISED GALLAGHER AND DYKES, SAYING I HAD RATHER STRICT INSTRUCTIONS FROM USG. WITH SITUATION IMPROVED, USG EXPECTS ITS TWO DIPLOMATS TO BENEFIT FROM MAXIMUM GOL EFFORT TO WIN THEIR RELEASE AFTER FOUR MONTHS OF CAPTIVITY. I SAID I NOTICED KIDNAPPINGS WHICH OCCUR ALMOST DAILY IN BEIRUT NORMALLY RESULT IN RELEASE OF THE LEBANESE OR OTHERS INVOLVED WITHIN A MATTER OF HOURS,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01646 232151Z

DAYS OR WEEKS. YET IN CASE OF AMERICAN DIPLOMATS, GOL

HAS SOMEHOW NOT BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN THEIR RELEASE IN OVER FOUR MONTHS. KARAME SOBERED UP AND REPLIED SERIOUSLY THAT GOL HAS BEEN DOING ITS BEST, AND HE HAS BEEN KEEPING AMBASSADOR INFORMED OF THESE EFFORTS. I REPLIED THAT WE WERE AWARE OF THESE EFFORTS BUT THAT AS TIME PASSES QUESTION OF PUBLICITY AND CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST ARISES. I CONTINUED ALONG THAT GENERAL LINE (REFTEL) ADDING THAT KIDNAPPING IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR AMERICAN BUSINESS FIRMS. MANY COMPANIES ORDERED THEIR REPRESENTATIVES OUT EVEN WHEN THESE REPRESENTATIVES WERE RELUCTANT TO LEAVE DURING THE LATE EVENTS PRIMARILY FOR FEAR OF KIDNAPPING. WE ALL DESIRED THE RETURN OF AMERICAN BUSINESS TO LEBANON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THESE COMPANIES WILL PERMIT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES TO RETURN AS LONG AS GALLAGHER AND DYKES ARE EVIDENCE OF KIDNAPPING THREAT. KARAME NODDED HIS UNDERSTANDING.

4. I THEN ASKED IF HE HAD ANY NEWS OF THE MEN, NOTING THAT I WAS AWARE, THROUGH THE FONMIN, THAT HE HAD BROUGHT IT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE HIGHER MILITARY COMMITTEE WHERE THE CASE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED. KARAME PICKED UP THE PHONE AND GOT THROUGH TO OFFICE OF BRIG. MOUSA KANAAN, TOP GOL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMITTEE. KANAAN WAS NOT THERE, BUT HE TALKED TO SOMEONE ELSE. WHEN HE FINISHED, HE TOLD ME PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMMITTEE, ABOU HASSAN, HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE CASE AND IS TO REPORT BACK TOMORROW. HE PROMISED TO CALL ME WITH THE RESULTS AND AGREED I COULD CALL IF I DESIRED. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD MADE THE POINT ABOUT AMERICAN BUSINESS FIRMS NEEDING SECURITY AGAINST KIDNAPPING IF THEY WERE TO COME BACK HERE AS WAS DESIRABLE.

5. FOR HIS OWN PART, KARAME SAID, HE WILL MENTION THE CASE TO FONMIN KHADDAM WHEN HE SEES HIM THIS AFTERNOON. I THANKED HIM AND ADDED WE CONTINUED TO BE GRATEFUL FOR GOL EFFORTS.

6. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION I TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01646 232151Z

DISCUSSION WE WERE VAGUELY AWARE OF WHICH INVOLVED ARMS THAT THE PEOPLE HOLDING THESE MEN WANTED IN EXCHANGE FOR THE MEN. KARAME NODDED REPEATEDLY TO INDICATE HE WAS AWARE OF THE QUESTION. HE ASKED IF IT WAS HABASH'S MEN WHO HELD THEM. I SAID THAT WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING ALTHOUGH AT TIMES PFLP REPS SAY IT IS A SMALLER LEBANESE GROUP THAT HAS THEM. I NOTED THEY HAD BEEN PICKED UP BY A LEBANESE GROUP IN THE

FIRST PLACE AND HE FILLED IN THE NAME: ISAM EL ARAB'S MEN. I SAID WE UNDERSTOOD PROBLEMS GOL MAY HAVE WITH EXCHANGING GUNS FOR PEOPLE, AND HOPED THERE MIGHT BE OTHER MEANS OF BRINGING PRESSURE TO BEAR ON PFLP. KARAME SAID HE THOUGH THIS WAS VERY DIFFICULT BUT AGAINST EXPRESSED HOPE IN WHAT KHADDAM MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO. HE MENTIONED HE HAD ALSO BROUGHT IT UP ONCE WITH ABU AMAR (ARAFAT). LATTER HAD SAID FATAH DID NOT WISH TO PUSH VERY HARD FOR THE RELEASE OF MEN BUT EXPECTED THEY WOULD BE RELEASED EVENTUALLY. KARAME ADMITTED THIS WAS OVER A MONTH AGO AND MEN HAD STILL NOT BEEN RELEASED.

7. I DEPARTED AFTER AGAIN EXPRESSING FRIENDLIEST FEELINGS OF USG FOR HIM PERSONALLY AND HIS ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND IN HELPING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLITICAL AGREEMENT. HE AGREED THAT IF ASKED I SHOULD TELL THE PRESS WE HAVE DISCUSSED CURRENT SITUATION AND EXPRESSED BEST WISHES OF USG. HE CAUTIONED AGAINST MENTIONING THE GALLAGHER AND DYKES CASE.

8. COMMENT: KARAME TO KHADDAM IS A NEW CHANNEL WHICH SHOULD REINFORCE OUR OTHER APPROACHES TO THE SYRIANS. LAMBRAKIS

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